The TATLER.

By *Isaac Bickerstaff* Esq;

——— *Gustus Elementa per omnia quærunt,*
Nunquam Animo Pretiis obstantibus.——— Juv.

From *Saturday March* 18. to *Tuesday March* 21. 1709.

From my own Apartment, March 20.

HAVING intimated in my last Paper, that I design to take under my Inspection the Diet of this great City, I shall begin with a very earnest and serious Exhortation to all my well-disposed Readers, that they would return to the Food of their Forefathers, and reconcile themselves to Beef and Mutton. This was the Diet which bred that hardy Race of Mortals who won the Fields of *Cressy* and *Agincourt*. I need not go up so high as the History of *Guy* Earl of *Warwick*, who is well known to have eaten up a Dun Cow of his own killing. The renowned King *Arthur* is generally looked upon as the First who ever sat down to a whole roasted Ox; (which was certainly the best Way to preserve the Gravy); and it is further added, that he and his Knights sat about it, at his Round Table, and usually continued in it to the very Bones before they would enter upon any Debate of Moment. The Black Prince was a professed Lover of the Basket; not to mention the History of the Sirloin, or the Institution of the Order of Beef-Eaters, which are all so many evident and undeniable Marks of the great Respect which our Warlike Predecessors have paid to this excellent Food. The Tables of the antient Gentry of this Nation were coveted thrice a Day with hot Roast-Beef; and I am credibly informed by an Antiquary, who has searched the Registers in which the Bills of Fare of the Court are recorded, that instead of Tea and Bread and Butter, which have prevailed of late Years, the Maids of Honour in Queen *Elizabeth*'s Time were allowed Three Rumps of Beef for their Breakfast. Mutton has likewise been in great Repute among our valiant Countrymen; but was formerly observed to be the Food rather of Men of nice and delicate Appetites, than those of strong and robust Constitutions. For which Reason, even to this Day, we use the Word Sheep-biter as a Term of Reproach, as we do Beef-Eater in a respectful and honourable Sense. As for the Flesh of Lamb, Veal, Chicken, and other Animals under Age, they were the Invention of sickly and degenerate Palates, according to that wholesom Remark of *Daniel* the Historian, who takes Notice, that in all Times upon Provisions, during the Reigns of several of our Kings, there is nothing mentioned besides the Flesh of such Fowl and Cattle as were arrived at their full Growth, and were mature for Slaughter. The Common People of this Kingdom do still keep up the Taste of their Ancestors; and it is to this, that we in a great Measure owe the unparallel'd Victories that have been gained in this Reign; for I would desire my Reader to consider, what Work our Countrymen would have made at *Blenheim* and *Ramillies*, if they had been fed with Kickshaws and Ragousts.

For this Reason, we at present see the florid Complexion, the strong Limb, and the hail Constitution, are to be found chiefly among the meaner Sort of People, or in the wild Gentry, who have been educated among the Woods or Mountains; whereas many great Families are insensibly fallen off from the Athletick Constitution of their Progenitors, and are dwandled away into a pale, sickly, Spindle-legged Generation of Valetudinarians.

I may perhaps be thought extravagant in my Notion; but I must confess, I am apt to impute the Dishonours that sometimes happen in great Families to the inflaming Kind of Diet which is so much in Fashion. Many Dishes can excite Desire without giving Strength, and heat the Body without nourishing it; as Physicians observe, That the poorest and most dispirited Blood is most subject to Fevers. I look upon a *French* Ragoust to be as pernicious to the Stomach as a Glass of Spirits; and when I have seen a young Lady swallow all the Instigations of high Soups, seasoned Sauces, and forced Meats, I have wondered at the Despair or tedious Sighing of her Lovers.

The Rules among these false Delicates, are to be as contradictory as they can be to Nature.

Without expecting the Return of Hunger, they eat for an Appetite, and prepare Dishes, not to allay, but to excite it.

They admit of nothing at their Tables in its natural Form, or without some Disguise.

They are to eat every Thing before it comes in Season, and to leave it off as soon as it is good to be eaten.

They are not to approve any Thing that is agreeable to ordinary Palates; and nothing is to gratify their Senses, but what would offend those of their Inferiors.

I remember I was last Summer invited to a Friend's House, who is a great Admirer of the *French* Cookery, and (as the Phrase is) *Eats well*. At our sitting down, I found the Table covered with a great Variety of unknown Dishes. I was mightily at

at a Loſs to learn what they were, and therefore did not know where to help my ſelf. That which ſtood before me I took to be a roaſted Porcupine, however did not Care for asking Queſtions; and have ſince been informed, that it was only a larded Turkey. I afterwards paſſed my Eye over ſeveral Haſhes which I do not know the Names of to this Day, and hearing that they were Delicacies, did not think fit to meddle with them.

Among other Dainties I ſaw ſomething like a Pheaſant, and therefore deſired to be helped to a Wing of it; but to my great Surprize my Friend told me it was a Rabbit, which is a Sort of Meat I never cared for. At laſt I diſcovered with ſome Joy a Pig at the lower End of the Table, and begged a Gentleman that was near it to cut me a Piece of it; Upon which, the Gentleman of the Houſe ſaid with great Civility, I am ſure you will like the Pig, for it was whipped to Death. I muſt confeſs, I heard him with Horror, and could not eat of an Animal that had died ſo Tragical a Death. I was now in great Hunger and Confuſion, when methoughts I ſmelled the agreeable Savour of Roaſt Beef, but could not tell from which Diſh it aroſe, tho I did not queſtion but it lay diſguiſed in one of them. Upon turning my Head, I ſaw a noble Sirloin upon the Side of the Table ſmoaking in the moſt delicious Manner. I had Recourſe to it more than once, and could not ſee without ſome Indignation that ſubſtantial *Engliſh* Diſh baniſhed in ſo ignominious a Manner to make Way for *French* Kickſhaws.

The Deſert was brought up at laſt, which in Truth was as extraordinary as any Thing that had come before it. The whole, when ranged in its proper Order, looked like a very beautiful Winter-piece. There were ſeveral Pyramids of candied Sweetmeats that hung like Icicles with Fruits ſcattered up and down, and hid in an artificial Kind of Froſt. At the ſame Time there were great Quantities of Cream beaten up into a Snow, and near them little Plates of Sugar-plumbs diſpoſed like ſo many Heaps of Hail-Stones, with a Multitude of Congelations in Gellies of various Colours. I was indeed ſo pleaſed with the ſeveral Objects which lay before me, that I did not care for diſplacing any of them, and was half angry with the reſt of the Company, that for the Sake of a Piece of Lemmon-Peal, or a Sugar-plumb, could ſpoil ſo pleaſing a Landskip. Indeed I could not but ſmile, to ſee ſeveral of them cooling their Mouths with Lumps of Ice, which they had juſt before been burning with Salts and Peppers.

As ſoon as this Show was over, I took my Leave, that I might finiſh my Dinner at my own Houſe; for as I in every Thing love what is ſimple and natural, ſo particularly in my Food. Two plain Diſhes with Two or Three good-natur'd, chearful, ingenious Friends, would make me more pleaſed and vain, than all that Pomp and Luxury can beſtow: For it is my Maxim, That he keeps the greateſt Table, who has the moſt valuable Company at it.

Advertiſements.

*** PROPOSALS for Printing the LUCUBRATIONS of Iſaac Bickerſtaff Eſq; by Subſcriptions, in Two Volumes in Octavo, on a Large Character, and Fine Royal Paper, are to be ſeen, and Subſcriptions taken, at Charles Lillie's, a Perfumer, at the Corner of Beauford Buildings in the Strand, and John Morphew's near Stationers-Hall. All Perſons that deſign to ſubſcribe to this Work, are deſired to ſend their Subſcriptions with all Expedition, the Book being put to Preſs, in order to have it publiſhed before Eaſter.

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*** There is juſt publiſhed, Copies and Extracts of ſome Letters, written to and from the Earl of Danby (now Duke of Leeds) in the Years 1676, 1677, and 1678. With particular Remarks on ſome of them. Publiſh'd by his Grace's Direction. Printed for J. Nicholſon at the Queen's Arms in Little-Britain, and ſold by J. Morphew near Stationers-Hall. In 8vo. Price 4 s. bound in Calf.

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*** This preſent Tueſday, and the Days following, at the Weſt End of Exeter-Exchange in the Strand, will be continued the Sale by Auction of an extraordinary Collection of Greek, Latin, Italian, French, and Engliſh Books. Beginning in the 10th Page; wherein is contained, L. Vallæ Elegant. Lat. Ling. Rob. Steph. waſh'd and ruled. Mariana de Rebus Hiſpan. Terentius Rob. Steph. and many other very valuable Books. Catalogues are ſold for 6 d. by J. Harding on the Pavement in St. Martin's-lane, E. Caſſile near the Admiralty-Office at Charing-Croſs, P. Varenne at Seneca's Head near Somerſet-houſe in the Strand, M. Wotton at the Three Daggers near the Temple-gate, J. Knapton at the Crown in St. Paul's Church-yard, S. Grouch at the Corner of Pope's-Head-alley, and at the Place of Sale.

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